

RETIREE NEWSLETTER

Travis, AFB

Fall 2003

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THE RETIREE NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE TO INFORM RETIREES, ANNUITANTS, AND FAMILY MEMBERS RESIDING IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA OF CHANGES IN LEGISLATION, DOD POLICIES AND OTHER MATTERS AFFECTING THEIR MILITARY RIGHTS, BENEFITS AND OBLIGATIONS. THERE IS ALSO INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE AIR BASE WHILE EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO VERIFY THE CONTENT. THE RAO STAFF CANNOT GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION FURNISHED BY OUTSIDE AGENCIES.

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We all owe Colonel Leonard Patrick, Commander of the 60th Support Group, a note of appreciation for arranging for the monetary support to re-instate the delivery of the Retiree Newsletter to your residence. I hope that circumstances will allow us to continue this service so that we may keep providing you useful information in years to come.

Our last three Newsletters have been carried on the Internet. In each issue I have advised of our continued need for volunteers to share their talents in the David Grant Medical Center, the Space A Section of the Air Terminal, the Retiree Activities Office or the McClellan Park satellite RAO. Our "staff" that operates the TAFB RAO has diminished by four well-qualified Counselors within the last year. In spite of our asking the retiree population that we serve for help in manning your office little success has been realized. So, again, if you can spare 3 hours out of your busy day either from 9AM to 12 noon, or 12 noon to 3PM, Monday through Friday, please give me a call at 424-3905. If that is not convenient I am generally in our office in Bldg 381, Suite 118 each day from 9 AM until noon and will be delighted to introduce you to the duties associated with the job of "still serving".

CMSGT Roche, who has been directing our free tax assistance program for the past 10+ years, advises that he needs a few volunteers in order to continue this much-appreciated program. If you are interested in helping please give him a call on any Friday between 0900 and 1200 and he will explain the prerequisites. He can be reached at 424-3904.

I am pleased to inform you that on April 24th 2004 we shall have a Retiree Appreciation Day. The formal portion of the program will be conducted at the TAFB Conference Center. We have asked the President of NAUS, Major General Murray, USAF Retired, to be our principal speaker. The entire program has not been firmed up at this time but our spring Newsletter will contain the program for that day.

I want to thank all of you retirees who are "still serving" at the Medical Center, at the Pharmacies, Space A Travel and the RAOs. Although your volunteering may seem insignificant, our individual efforts do contribute measurably to the 60th Air Mobility Command mission and to serving our fellow retirees.


Joseph M. Rowan, MSGT USAF Retired
Director, Retiree Activities Office

60th Medical Group:

From the Commander's Stethoscope:

The past three months have seen the graduation of another group of healthcare providers, the beginning of a new residency class and, of course, the usual summertime PCS moves for some Med Group people you've become accustomed to over the past year or more. Therefore, there may be some gaps in our capacity to see patients---and with some "fresh" faces in the facility, this may result in some retirees having to "tell your story again."

At DGMC we have several residency programs and other unique teaching programs as a medical training facility. In our desire to teach the newest members of our Air Force Medical Service, we want to thank you for your patience as well as being our patients. It is our pleasure and privilege to provide you with the best healthcare service possible. Please let us hear from you or your doctor (if you have received care outside DGMC), should they wish to refer you to us for specialty care. While we may or may not have capacity in the specific area of your need, we would sure like the chance to provide for your care if at all possible.

At the peak of Operation Iraqi Freedom we deployed about 200 of our personnel to the Middle East conflict. Some, like our Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCATT) folks, were initially involved in casualty care, including the recovery and transport of former Army POW Jessica Lynch. Our retirees can be proud of the fact that for more than sixty years the men and women of both Travis AFB and DGMC are continuing the fine legacy our retirees have left behind. We are "Proud to Serve; Ready to Heal" as our new motto states.

As our retirees already know, the need to train our medical personnel in wartime readiness skills is very important. This year, our biggest effort is currently being scheduled for the week of October 6-11, so there may be some shortages of appointments during that time frame. Please bear with us as your Med Group continues to deploy in support of contingency and humanitarian missions "anytime, anywhere," while ensuring world-class medical care and service to you, our customers at home.

Finally, studies continually show that efforts to change any unhealthy lifestyles can improve our health and quality of life even into our 80's and 90's. If you are interested in stopping smoking, beginning an exercise or weight training program or other such activity, please let us know. (James D Collier, Colonel, USAF, MC. Commander, 60th Medical Group, Lead Agent, TRICARE Region 10)

PATIENT CARE ENHANCED BY DGMC PHARMACY:

This past spring, our Pharmacy underwent two major enhancements to its operation. The pharmacy implemented "Point of Service" and installed new equipment called PharmASSIST. These Air Force wide enhancements are geared toward increasing patient safety and will require patients and staff to process prescriptions in a completely different manner. Point of Service is an interactive customer-focused counseling session between the pharmacist or technician and the patient who is present at the start of the prescription filling process. When the

patient presents to the pharmacy or presents a prescription to be filled, their medication profile or history is verified and screened for drug overlaps, allergies and drug interactions. If problems are discovered the patient is present to help in the resolution. The end result is the patient becomes more involved in their therapy and health.

Pharm-ASSIST is a totally new way of filling prescriptions for the pharmacy and uses bar code technology and digital images to fill prescriptions. The value of avoiding a medication error is priceless and the new system has added a very significant layer of patient protection.

Most of you are now aware that patients must “check-in” at the pharmacy window to activate their new prescriptions. The process for picking up refills that the patient has called in (707-423-7600 or 800-254-3462) has not changed. Refills called in by 5pm will be ready for pick-up at the Exchange Mini-Mall the following duty day.

Everyone’s patience and understanding during these major upgrades was greatly appreciated. As with any new system, the pharmacies as well as the patients had to learn the new processes. The dust has settled from these dramatic changes and the pharmacy is embarking on additional services to enhance the pharmacy experience for all of their patients.

MY PAY IMPROVES DFAS ELECTRONIC PAY SERVICES:

As more members of the military retiree community, including both retirees and annuitants, become computer oriented, Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials are increasing emphasis on its “my Pay” system.

my Pay is DFAS’s way of allowing customers to manage their pay account information easier and more surely than ever before. A secure web site and a PIN number make myPay secure and the system has been designed to be customer friendly.

Officials point out that retired members and SBP annuitants will find;

1. my Pay is available via the Internet 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
2. my Pay delivers the Retiree Account Statement (RAS) or Annuitant Account Statement before print mail;
3. Changes made on myPay are effective the current pay period;
4. With myPay, you have the confidence of knowing your pay information is accurate because you’re in charge;
5. Access to myPay is available at <https://myPay.dfas.mil>:

Features of myPAY for both retirees and annuitants:

1. View and print the Retiree or Annuitant Account Statement;
2. View and print tax statements;
3. Update bank account and electronic fund transfer information;
4. Edit personal address information;

In addition, retirees can change both federal and state tax withholdings while annuitants can change federal withholdings; further, retirees can manage financial allotments and US Savings Bonds.

To use myPAY, retirees and annuitants must have a Personal Identification Number (PIN). DFAS customers without a PIN may obtain one by accessing myPay

and clicking on "New Pin" or by calling 1-877-363-3677 and following the prompts. A new random temporary PIN for your account will be mailed to your address of record. You should allow 10 business days for delivery. (Air Force Retiree News, Randolph AFB)

AIR FORCE WORLDWIDE LOCATOR

The AF Worldwide Locator handles official and unofficial requests to locate Air Force Personnel. Official requests are defined as requests received from any government agency and the Dept. of Defense. All other requests are considered unofficial in nature. The Locator only has location information on individuals who are currently receiving compensation from the USAF (Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Retired and Civil Service Personnel). If the individual has separated from the AF, no information is available.

The following information is required to make a positive identification.

1. Full name to include a middle initial, rank (officer/enlisted/GS), Social Security Number or Air Force serial number, Date of birth or an Air Force duty history to include the place, month and year of assignments after June 1970. No assignment information is available prior to June 1970.

OFFICIAL REQUEST

DoD official requests may be handled over the phone providing the requestor gives their full name, rank, SSN, organization and purpose of the request. Failure to provide this information will result in non-disclosure of requested information. Federal or State Government agency request for information must be pursuant to the Privacy Act as stated in United States Code 552(a)(7). The request must be in writing on official letterhead and signed by the Section Chief or higher. Law enforcement agency requests must be in writing on the appropriate letterhead.

UNOFFICIAL REQUESTS

All unofficial requests must be in writing and fees may be applicable. State in your request who you are looking for along with your name, address and telephone number. Your request constitutes consent to release this information to the member. Place this information in an unsealed envelope with a return address, postage affixed and the individual's name in the address portion of the envelope. Mail all information to the Worldwide Locator.

FEES

A fee of \$3.50, per individual request, is required from all personnel or businesses requesting addresses on military personnel. Requests must be in writing. The Worldwide Locator also provides a "Statement of Verification of Service". This applies to active duty AF personnel only. A fee of \$5.20, per individual written request is required. Checks or money orders must be made payable to DAO-DE Randolph AFB TX (Randolph AFB TX)

HISTORY OF TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE:

___What began as an isolated airstrip on a windswept California prairie with a few tarpaper barracks and maintenance hangers is now the site of the largest military aerial port in the United States-providing rapid global mobility through airlift and aerial refueling.

In April 1942, the Army Corps of Engineers authorized expenditure of \$1 million to build a bomber base in the San Francisco area.

By September of that year, with the base still under construction, the Army Air Corps and Navy were practicing takeoffs and landings on the new runways. The Navy especially liked the prevailing winds at the base, which simulated conditions at sea, and for a time the runway was painted with the outline of an aircraft carrier deck.

The suitability of the site as a major aerial port and supply marshaling point for the Pacific Theater, however, soon scrapped plans for the bomber base. When the installation was officially named Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base on February 8, 1943, it was assigned to Air Transport Command. By the close of World War II, Fairfield-Suisun handled 75 percent of all ATC cargo and mail shipments to the South Pacific: 323 tons of freight, 302 tons of mail and 300 wounded servicemen evacuated in February 1945 alone.

Construction in the postwar era made Fairfield-Suisun one of the most modern installations in the newly formed Air Force. The base received the name it carries today on October 20, 1950, in honor of its Commanding Officer, Brigadier General Robert Falligant Travis, who died in a B-29 crash during takeoff on August 5, of that year.

Throughout the Cold War, Travis AFB-with forces assigned to the Military Transport Service, later designated Military Airlift Command-enhanced its reputation for excellence as the "Gateway to the Pacific."

During the peak years of the Vietnam War, 1966-1970, more than one million passengers and 200,000 tons of cargo moved through Travis each year. The base ingrained itself in the national consciousness through three operations that dealt with the aftermath of that war.

During Operation Homecoming in 1973, 280 prisoners of war, nearly half the number of Americans held, returned home through Travis. Two years later, Operation Babylift, brought 2,945 Southeast Asian children to the United States, and Project New Life brought 68,394 Southeast Asian refugees (the "boat people") through Travis in 1979 and 1980.

Following realignment actions in 1994, Travis lost its C-141 Starlift cargo aircraft, which had been at the base since 1965. In their place, the base acquired two squadrons of KC-10 Extender tanker aircraft, which joined two squadrons flying the massive C-5 Galaxy airlifter, which had arrived at Travis in 1970.

From Operation Desert Storm in Southeast Asia to Operation Allied Force in the Balkans, Travis has played a vital role in the worldwide deployment and employment of military forces.

The base has also supported humanitarian relief efforts on every continent, as well as providing special airlift support for everything from presidential travel to scientific research conducted by America's space program.

For more information on Travis' history, visit the Travis Museum, open 9a.m. to 4p.m., Monday through Saturday or anytime on-line at www.travis.af.mil/air_museum. (Resource Guide for Team Travis, FY 03/04)

TRICARE FOR LIFE AND THE ID CARD PUZZLE:

If you are a sponsor, age 65 or over, eligible for Medicare Parts A and B, and have purchased Part B, you do not need to update your current ID card to receive health care under TFL....even if the medical eligibility status printed on the back of your ID card indicates "Civilian No".

Medicare Part B is required for TFL eligibility. If you have used TFL and have received a TRICARE explanation of benefits statement TFL has paid your claims, you do not need to notify DEERS that you have Medicare Part B. Your Medicare Part B information has been picked up in a data match with Medicare. You do not need to update anything in DEERS other than changes in your residence, mailing address or family member status. If you haven't used TFL yet or don't think that your Medicare Part B information is being picked up during TFL claims processing, you may call your regional managed care support contractor or visit your nearest military personnel office that has an ID-card facility and have them register your Medicare Part B enrollment status in DEERS.

If you visit an ID-card facility, you should take your Medicare card with you. You do not need to obtain a new ID card when you add your enrollment in Medicare Part B because you are only updating your record. If you are a family member, survivor, or TRICARE-eligible former spouse age 65 or over, eligible for Medicare Parts A and B, and have purchased Part B, you need to exam your ID card and see if it has expired. If you have an expired ID card, you should visit or contact the nearest military personnel office that has an ID-card facility to have a new ID card issued.

Individuals not able to travel should contact the nearest ID-card facility for instructions on renewing ID cards by mail. To renew your ID card, you must have a pre-verified application form titled "Application for Uniformed Services Identification Card—DEERS Enrollment, DD Form 1172." If your sponsor is alive, your sponsor must sign the form in front of a notary public or other authorized verifying officer. If you are a survivor, you should contact your local ID-card office to inquire about the required documents to obtain an ID card. ID cards are current for four years, unless you turn 65 during the four- year period. Turning 65 is another reason your ID card's medical eligibility status will expire.

If you are age 65 or over and have recently updated your ID card, your medical eligibility status printed on the back of your ID card might show "Civilian Yes". This means you are eligible for TFL. If you have had no reason to update your ID card (it hasn't expired and you haven't recently turned 65, that is, you turned 65 a couple of years ago), your medical eligibility status printed on the back of your ID card might show as "Civilian No". You are not required to update you current ID card to receive health care under TFL. The next time you update your ID card, the medical eligibility status will be changed.

To update Medicare Parts A and B eligibility and purchase of Part B in your DEERS record, the process is the same for sponsors, family members, and survivors of eligible former sponsors as long as their Social Security number (in addition to the sponsor's) is recorded in DEERS. If you have used TFL and have received a TRICARE explanation of benefits, it is not necessary for you to update DEERS. Your Medicare Part B information has been picked up in a data match with Medicare. You do not need to update anything in DEERS other than changes in your residence or mailing address.

To verify your eligibility in DEERS, you may call the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office toll free at 1-800-538-9552 or TTY/TDD: 1-800-363-2883 for speech or hearing impaired. If you require additional information on enrolling in Medicare Part B, contact the Social Security Administration toll free at 1-800-772-1213 or TTY/TDD: 1-800-325-0778 for speech or hearing impaired. (Retiree Newsletter, Randolph AFB TX) For inquiries regarding your ID Card call 707-424-8466/8468/8480 @ Travis AFB.

RELOCATION OF DFAS SERVICES:

The Defense Financing and Accounting Service has consolidated annuity and retired pay services and has relocated their respective mailrooms to London, Kentucky. Here are the new addresses and phone numbers.

RETIRED PAY: DFAS- US Military Retirement Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130
FAX: 1-800-469-6559

ANNUITANT PAY: DFAS- US Military Annuitant Pay
P.O. Box 7131
London, KY 40741-7131
FAX: 1-800-982-8459

Retirees and Annuitants can talk to a customer service representative at the Contact Center by calling 1-800-321-1080, Monday through Friday, 0700-1930, Eastern Time. (RAO March ARB, CA)

BURIAL AT SEA:

Questions have been raised regarding the disposition of remains performed on US Navy vessels. The committal ceremony is performed while the ship is deployed. Therefore, family members are not allowed to be present. Individuals eligible for the program are active duty members of the uniformed services, retirees, and veterans who were honorably discharged. Also, US civilian marine personnel of the Military Sealift Command, and dependent family members of active duty personnel, retirees and veterans of the uniformed services. For more information contact the US Navy Mortuary Affairs Office at 1-888-647-6676 and elect option 4. (RAO March ARB CA)

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

		<u>60TH MEDICAL GROUP</u>	
Accounting & Finance	424-3925	Information	423-7300
Base Exchange	437-4633	Appointments	423-3000
Casualty Reporting	424-2106	Appointments Toll Free	800-264-3462
Civilian Personell	424-3067	Pharmacy Refills	423-7600
Delta Breeze Clubs	437-4597	Pharmacy	423-5345
Commissary	437-4004	Primary Care	423-5351
Customer Service(ID Cards)	424-8466/8468/8480	Internal Medicine	423-5053
Judge Advocate	424-3251	Tricare	800-242-6788
Lodging	437-4779	Health Benefits Office	423-7921
Retiree Activities Office	424-3904		
Security Police	424-2227	<u>Useful 800 Numbers</u>	
Space 'A'	424-5703/5704	Cleveland Finance Center	800-321-1080
Tickets & Tours	424-0970	Casualty Reporting	800-269-5170
Vehicle Registration	424-2276	SBP Annuitants	800-435-3396
Veterinary Clinic	424-3010/2985	VA Regional Office	800-827-1000
Visitors Center	424-7198/1462	Social Security	800-772-1213